

CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

PURPOSE

This Sign Manual replaces the October 1978 edition of the National Park Service Sign System Specifications (NPS-SSS). It is designed for use by Park managers as an aid to the implementation of the National Park Service Traffic Control Sign System Guideline (NPS-52) and in arriving at management decisions regarding other park signing needs. It is intended that Park managers will utilize this Manual as a guide in the designing and ordering of all vehicular and pedestrian traffic control signing and other pertinent devices.

This Manual constitutes the official National Park Service supplement to the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. Together, the MUTCD and this Manual are utilized by the National Park Service to provide for park managers recommended standards, specifications and procedures for the NPS Sign System to assure a uniform and distinctive system of signing and graphics in meeting the Service's obligations under Public Law 89-564, the Highway Safety Act of 1966, and the Highway Safety Program Standards 23 USC 402, in a manner consistent with National Park Service missions.

APPLICABILITY

Long established and documented National Park Service policy [**Park Road Standards** (1968 and 1984)] holds that park roads have a unique purpose, which differs significantly from the purpose of roads on the Federal and state highway systems. The **Park Road Standards** contain the following admonishment to park visitors:

**Park roads are for leisurely driving only. If you are
in a hurry, you might do well to take another route now,
and come back when you have more time.**

Signing on all park roads should be consistent with National Park Service policy that park roads are not intended to provide fast and convenient transportation, nor designed or intended to serve as commuter routes or connecting links to the Federal and state highway systems. Rather, they are intended to enhance the park experience while providing safe and efficient accommodation of park visitors.

In this regard, the MUTCD in conjunction with this NPS Sign Manual, should be utilized by Superintendents as guidance in making management decisions on the design, location, and application of road signs and markings on park roads; and it is the policy of the National Park Service to follow the MUTCD with respect to the format of all regulatory signs installed on NPS roads open to public vehicular traffic.

Nevertheless, the individual park manager, following the guidelines and procedures set down in NPS-52, has the responsibility for determining whether or not a sign is necessary or appropriate at a given location. The decision to utilize a particular sign at a particular location requires the professional judgment of the park manager--drawing upon available guides, resources, and traffic safety engineering expertise--and considering a variety of other factors, such as the appearance of the road as a whole and its relationship to the natural and/or historical environment through which it passes.

It is important in this regard, too, that such decisions bear in mind long standing NPS policy to minimally intrude upon the natural or historic setting in National Park System areas, and to avoid an unnecessary proliferation of signs, while striving to ensure for the safety of park visitors.

Through an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration, the National Park Service has developed several specific exceptions to specific sections of the MUTCD, as follows:

Section 2A-27 Posts and Mountings

Add: Timber sign supports: A soil mounted timber sign support is acceptable as a breakaway support if it has a uniform cross section of not more than 24 square inches, or if within an 8-foot width path, there are:

Two posts, each no larger than 3'' x 6'' or 4'' x 5'' dimension stock, or round posts no larger than 5'' diameter, or 15¾'' circumference.

Three posts, each no larger than 3'' x 5'' or 4'' x 4'' dimension stock, or round posts no larger than 4½'' diameter or 14'' circumference.

Section 2D-3 Color, ReflectORIZATION, and Illumination

Add: Brown shall be the background color for all guide signs on National Park Service roads except for detour markers, detour signs, arrows, route markers, markers, or assemblies indicating a junction or intersection with an interstate highway.

Section 2D-5 Lettering Style

Add: Modified Clarendon lettering shall be used on all National Park Service guide and informational signs.

Example of letter style is shown in Appendix A.

Section 2D-6 Size of Lettering

Add: The size of lettering required for guide signs is directly a function of design speed. Die-cut letter fonts for the Modified Clarendon style are available in 3.75'', 6'', 9'', and 12'' capital heights. Corresponding lowercase sizes are two-thirds the capital height. Minimum standards for use of these letters are shown in Chapter 5 of this Manual.

Section 2D-7 Amount of Legend

Detailed guidelines for determining sign size and text are found in Chapter 5 of this Manual.